

**In the Specification:**

Please amend the paragraph in the specification beginning on page 8, line 31, as indicated in the marked-up paragraph below:

Alternatively, and as shown in FIG. 9, a single rotary cutting tool 152 can be used to generate the slot 16. The rotary cutting tool 152 is stepped and includes an ~~first upper~~ cutting portion 154 defining a first outer diameter  $d_1$  equivalent to the width  $w_1$  of the first slot section 18, and a second cutting lower tip portion 156 defining a second outer diameter  $d_2$  equivalent to the width  $w_2$  of the second slot section 20 that is coaxial with the first cutting portion 154. Similarly and as shown in FIG. 10, the single rotary cutting tool 152 can include a tapered region 158 to smoothly transition between the first and second diameters,  $d_1$  and  $d_2$  respectively. The tapered region 158 includes cutting flutes 160 extending about its periphery, such that during a slot cutting operation the cutting tool 152 smoothly and cleanly cuts the slots 16 into the die board base 12. Helical cutting flutes 160 (as shown in FIGS. 9 and 10) that extend longitudinally along both the first cutting portion 154 and the second cutting portion 156 of the rotary cutting tool 152 have particular utility. While the die board base has been illustrated for simplicity in FIGS. 8-10 as being comprised of a single layer, the present invention is not limited in this regard as the die board base 12 can be a laminate comprised of two or more layer of die board material without departing from the broader aspects of the present invention. In addition, while rotary cutting tools have been shown and described, the present invention is not limited in this regard as other type of cutting methods, such as sawing, employing a laser, or utilizing high-pressure water jets can be substituted without departing from the broader aspects of the present invention.